

<b>Applicant Name</b>	Ravalli County
<b>Project Name</b>	Improved Resource Protection, Floodplain Hazard Mapping, and Land-Use Planning for Ravalli County

### **Project Abstract**

Ravalli County is one of the fastest growing areas in Montana. In order to identify and protect sensitive resources, update and expand flood hazard mapping, and implement sections of the Growth Policy, the county needs more accurate elevation data in digital format. The county currently has 20 to 40 foot elevation contour intervals available only on paper. As a result, an unavoidable margin of error is introduced and significant additional staff time and project costs are generated.

Phase 1 obtains one-foot elevation contour intervals using Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) technology for approximately 228 square miles in the fastest growing northern portion of Ravalli County. Phase 2 provides the same information. By providing this critical data, this project will help Ravalli County conserve, manage, and preserve important land, water, and wildlife resources.

The data would assist in the following areas:

- Location and maintenance of irrigation ditches;
- Groundwater monitoring (wastewater permits);
- Subdivision review – impacts to agriculture, irrigation systems, wildlife and habitat, surface/groundwater quality and quantity, surface water features (streams, rivers, and riparian areas), wetlands;
- Sensitive areas – agricultural lands, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, riparian areas, wildlife habitat/corridors (including elk winter range);
- Accurate determination of riparian setback/buffer distances;
- Floodplain boundary delineations and violation determinations; and
- Road maintenance and drainage plans.

Beneficiaries would include:

- Landowners, residents;
- Local businesses – realtors/brokers, developers, surveyors, engineers, architects, builders, landscape designers, well drillers, hydrologists;
- Irrigation districts, surface water right holders;
- Visitors, recreationists, outfitters (hunting, fishing);
- Ravalli County boards – Commissioner, Planning, Health, Right to Farm and Ranch, Weed, Park;
- Ravalli County departments – Planning, Environmental Health, Floodplain, Roads and Bridges, Geographic Information System (GIS), Disaster and Emergency Services;
- Communities – Florence, Stevensville, Victor, Corvallis, Pinedale, Hamilton, Darby, Conner, Sula; and
- Ravalli County Fish/Wildlife Association, Bitter Root Water Forum, Bitter Root Land Trust, Bitterroot Trout Unlimited, Montana Audubon, Montana Wetlands Legacy, Bitterroot Conservation District, Extension Services, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA).